Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A protected display case providing security for exhibiting items and for storing items when items are not on display comprising;

a) a top section having at least one viewing window and defining a top volume;

b) a bottom section having a peripheral wall and defining a bottom volume;

c) an access opening between the top and bottom volumes;

d) a shelf disposed within the display case and adapted to receive items for viewing, the shelf having a raised position in which the items on the shelf are in the top volume and available for viewing through the viewing window and a lowered position in which the shelf and items are disposed within the bottom volume;

e) a lifting mechanism disposed within the bottom section and comprising a motor, a gear assembly, and at least two guides, the two guides being spaced apart and aligned vertically adjacent to the peripheral wall of the bottom section, the motor, gear assembly, and guides working in cooperation to raise and lower the shelf while maintaining the shelf substantially horizontal;

f) a movable panel assembly having a retracted position in which the access opening is unobstructed and a deployed position in which the movable panel assembly substantially covers the access opening; and

g) at least one door situated on the protected display case such that the items on the shelf can be accessed.

2. (Original) The protected display case of Claim 1 wherein the viewing window is comprised of breakage resistant material and the peripheral wall of the bottom section is penetration resistant.

3. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 1 wherein the movable panel assembly includes a plurality of individually hinged panels and at least one roller, the hinged panels being stored on said roller when the panel assembly is in a retracted position.

4. (Original) The protected display case of Claim 3 wherein the guides have a longitudinal axis, the guides being rotatable about the longitudinal axis to raise and lower the shelf.

5. (Original) The protected display case of Claim 3 wherein each of the guides comprise an elongated track and the gear assembly being arranged to engage the track and move the shelf along the track to thereby raise and lower the shelf.

6. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 4 wherein the protected display case has opposing sides, a front, a back, a top, and a bottom and the movable panel assembly moves in a direction from one side toward the opposing side.

7. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 5 wherein the protected display case has opposing sides, a front, a back, a top, and a bottom and the movable panel assembly moves in a direction from one side toward the opposing side.

8. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 4 wherein the protected display case has two sides, a front, a back, a top, and a bottom and the movable panel assembly moves in a direction from the back toward the front.

9. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 5 wherein the protected display case has two sides, a front, a back, a top, and a bottom and the movable panel assembly moves in a direction from the back toward the front.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 5 wherein the protected display case has two sides, a front, a back, a top, and a bottom and the movable panel assembly moves in a direction from one side toward the other side.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Canceled)

14. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 4 further comprising switches for limiting the movement of the movable panel assembly and the lifting mechanism, and a motor for transitioning the movable panel assembly into a closed position, and a roller assembly having a biased spring for transitioning the movable panel assembly into an opened position.

15. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 5 further comprising switches for limiting the movement of the movable panel assembly and the lifting mechanism, and a panel motor for transitioning the movable panel assembly into a closed position, and a roller assembly having a biased spring for transitioning the movable panel assembly into an opened position.

16. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 14 further including a power outlet and computer controlled switch between the power outlet and the motor and wherein the protected display case has a computer access port for connecting the protected display case to a computer such that the computer may monitor and operate the lifting mechanism and movable panel assembly.

17. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 15 further including a power outlet and computer controlled switch between the power outlet and the motor and wherein the protected display case has a computer access port for connecting the protected display case to a computer such that the computer may monitor and operate the lifting mechanism and movable panel assembly.

18. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 5 including a power outlet and computer controlled switch between the power outlet and the motor and wherein the protected display case has a computer access port for connecting the protected display case to a computer such that the computer may monitor and operate the protected display case.

19. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 4 wherein the protected display case has a manual control panel adapted to control the operation of the protected display case.

20. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 5 wherein the protected display case has a manual control panel adapted to control the operation of the protected display case.

21. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 4 wherein the protected display case has a manual control panel adapted to activate an alarm.

22. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 5 wherein the protected display case has a manual control panel adapted to activate an alarm.

23. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 4 wherein the shelf has sides includes a flexible peripheral band adapted to bend when contacting an obstruction adjacent the edge of the shelf when being raised or lowered.

24. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 5 wherein the shelf has sides includes a flexible peripheral band adapted to bend when contacting an obstruction adjacent the edge of the shelf when being raised or lowered.

25. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 4 wherein the movable panel assembly is adapted to respond to obstruction in the access opening and the movable panel assembly stops closing when an obstruction is detected.

26. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 5 wherein the movable panel assembly is adapted to respond to obstruction in the access opening and the movable panel assembly stops closing when an obstruction is detected.

27. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 4 wherein the movable panel assembly comprises a plurality of hinged panels.

28. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 5 further comprising a plurality of movable panel assemblies.

29. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 1 wherein the lifting mechanism includes a stabilizing assembly comprised of a pair of hat shaped rails secured to the opposite sides of the bottom section and a carriage having a movable shelf support and at least two wheels which engage the hat shaped rail and the wheels working in conjunction with the hat shaped rails to restrict lateral movement by the carriage as the carriage moves along the guides.

30. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 29 wherein the guide is in the form of a hat shaped rail having two edges and the gear assembly has at least two wheels for each guide and the wheels being adapted to engage the sides of the hat shaped rail thereby limiting the deviation of the shelf.

31. (Previously Amended) The protected display case as in Claim 3 wherein the lifting mechanism further comprises:

a) a gear box having a first and second output and the motor and the gear box being disposed on the bottom of the shelf and the motor being connected to the gear box, the gear box being part of the gear assembly;

b) a U-joint connected to each output of said gear box;

c) a rod connected to each U-joint;

d) a coupling connected to each rod opposing the U-joint;

e) a second rod connected to each coupling;

f) a worm gear connected to the second rod;

h) a gear adapted to receive the worm gear;

i) a gear housing containing the gear and worm gear and the gear housing being secured to the shelf; and

j) track teeth being part of the track that work in conjunction with the gear such that when the motor is operating the motor causes the gear box to operate thereby rotating the U-joint, rod, coupling, second rod, and worm gear to rotate and the worm gear and in turn causes the gear to operate and the gear engages the track teeth causing the shelf to move in relation to the track.

32. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 2 wherein the movable panel assembly is comprised of a plurality of individually hinged panels with the hinged panels being stacked in an accordion like manner when the movable panel assembly is in a retracted position.

33. (Original) The protected display case as in Claim 5 further comprising a hat shaped rail and a carriage, the carriage having a movable shelf support and at least two wheels and the two wheels being adapted to engage the hat shaped rail such that the carriage is movable in a substantially vertical direction.

34. (Canceled)

35. (Canceled)

36. (Currently Amended) The protected display case of claim1 [[whrein]] wherein the guides are in the form of lead screws.

37. (Original) The protected display case of claim 36 wherein the gear assembly includes a nut assembly secured to the shelf and rotatably coupled to the lead screws.

38. (New) A protected display case providing security for exhibiting items and for storing items when items are not on display comprising:

a) a top section having at least one viewing window and defining a top volume;

b) a bottom section having a peripheral wall with opposing sides and defining a bottom volume;

c) an access opening between the top and bottom volumes;

d) a lifting mechanism disposed within the bottom section and comprising a pair of vertically aligned guides disposed along opposing sides of the peripheral wall of the bottom section, each guide having track teeth, a motor disposed under and carried by the shelf, a gear assembly carried by the shelf and coupled between the motor and the track, so that operation of the motor causes the shelf to move in relation to the track from the lowered to the raised position and visa versa;

e) a movable panel assembly having a retracted position in which the access opening is unobstructed and a deployed position in which the movable panel assembly substantially covers the access opening; and

f) at least one door situated on the protected display case such that the items on the shelf can be accessed.

39. (New) The protected display case as in Claim 38 wherein the movable panel assembly includes a plurality of individually hinged panels and at least one roller, the hinged panels being stored on said roller when the panel assembly is in a retracted position.

40. (New) The protected display case as in Claim 39 wherein the protected display case has opposing sides, a front, a back, a top, and a bottom and the movable panel assembly moves in a direction from one side toward the opposing side.

41. (New) The protected display case as in Claim 40 further comprising switches for limiting the movement of the movable panel assembly and the lifting mechanism, and a motor for transitioning the movable panel assembly into a closed position, and a roller assembly having a biased spring for transitioning the movable panel assembly into an opened position

42. (New) The protected display case as in Claim 39 wherein the protected display case has a manual control panel adapted to activate an alarm.

43. (New) The protected display case as in Claim 39 wherein the shelf has sides includes a flexible peripheral band adapted to bend when contacting an obstruction adjacent the edge of the shelf when being raised or lowered.

44. (New) The protected display case as in Claim 43 wherein the movable panel assembly is adapted to respond to obstruction in the access opening and the movable panel assembly stops closing when an obstruction is detected.

45. (New) The protected display case of Claim 38 wherein the gear assembly includes a pair of shafts carried by the shelf having one end coupled to the motor and the other end coupled through gearing to the gear teeth on each track.

46. (New) The protected display case of Claim 45 wherein the gear assembly further includes a gear box carried by the shelf and coupled between the motor and said one end of each shaft.

47. (New) The protected display case of Claim 46 wherein the gearing between the other end of each of the shafts and the track teeth comprise a cog wheel and worm gear.

48. (New) the protected display case of Claim 47 wherein the gear box is coupled to said one end of each shaft via a U-joint.

49. (New) The protected display case of Claim 38 wherein the gear assembly comprises:

a) a gear box having a first and second output and the motor and the gear box being disposed on the bottom of the shelf and the motor being connected to the gear box, the gear box being part of the gear assembly;

b) a U-joint connected to each output of said gear box;

c) a rod connected to each U-joint;

d) a coupling connected to each rod opposing the U-joint;

e) a second rod connected to each coupling;

f) a worm gear connected to the second rod;

g) a gear adapted to receive the worm gear;

h) a gear housing containing the gear and worm gear and the gear housing being secured to the shelf; and

i) track teeth being part of the track that work in conjunction with the gear such that when the motor is operating the motor causes the gear box to operate thereby rotating the U-joint, rod, coupling, second rod, and worm gear to rotate and the worm gear and in turn causes the gear to operate and the gear engages the track teeth causing the shelf to move in relation to the track.

50. (New) The protected display case of Claim 38 further including a hat shaped rail mounted on each opposing side of the bottom section and a carriage mounted under the shelf adjacent each guide, the carriage having at least two wheels for engaging the sides of the associated has shape rail, the hat shaped rails operating in conjunction to keep the shelf in a substantially horizontal position while the shelf is moving or in a stationary position.